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## Towards the Cooperative Commonwealth

H. I. S. BORGFORD

*And they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit thereof. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of the tree shall be the days of my people, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.* (Isaiah 65: 21-22)

Nearly twenty-five years ago the late James Shaver Woodsworth, founder, first president and leader of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, quoted these twenty-five century old words of Isaiah at an open-air meeting during the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike. The re-utterance of the Prophet's words of hope was one of the counts on which he was arrested and charged with seditious libel. He was successful in defending himself against the charge, but the event will always be cited as a significant and dramatic antecedent to the subsequent development of Canada's native, democratic, socialist political party. J. S. Woodsworth was a Canadian of United Empire Loyalist stock. Educated in colleges of Ontario and Manitoba, with a year's post-graduate study at Oxford University in England, he entered the ministry of the Methodist Church, which he served with devotion from 1900 to 1918. He resigned because he could not accept the support given by his church to the Great War. For a year he worked as a longshoreman in Vancouver. Returning to Winnipeg in 1919 during the General Strike he sided with the strikers and a little later took over the editorship of the Strike bulletin. Although the strike was lost, Woodsworth grew in favor with the workers and was elected to the Dominion Parliament in December 1921 from the constituency of Winnipeg North Centre, a seat which he held until his death in March 1942, in his sixty-eighth year.

The above is cited in the belief that it will be helpful in understanding the wellsprings of power that feed the CCF and because the late leader, through his character and devotion to purpose, contributed more than any other single individual to the laying of the solid foundations on which the movement is built.

The phenomenal success of the party in recent years in electing members to legislatures and Parliament, culminating with the election last August of thirty-four members to the Ontario Legislature, where it had no previous representation, has evoked almost worldwide curiosity. Public opinion polls taken recently accord the CCF equal status with the historic "old-line" Liberal and Progressive-Conservative parties, and across the Dominion it is recognized as a serious contender for power in provincial legislatures as well as in the Federal Parliament. The CCF is no mere mushroom on the Canadian scene, but the fruit of tireless labor expended over the past twenty-five years. For the last twelve years it has been an organized movement. The labor has been and is freely given by thousands of citizens from coast to coast who are united in their determination to establish in Canada "a Cooperative Commonwealth in which the principle regulating production, distribution and exchange will be the supplying of human needs and not the making of profits."<sup>11</sup>

The unrest which followed the last war saw the rise of various "progressive" political movements. A large block of western farmers was elected to Parliament in 1921, and various independent labor groups grew up, or had a resurgence of life in industrial centres, and offered candidates for legislative seats. Only two of these were elected to the Dominion Parliament—Woodsworth from Winnipeg and the Reverend William Irvine, then the Unitarian minister in Calgary, Alberta, from Calgary East. In subsequent elections Irvine was elected to represent Wetaskiwin, Alberta, until his defeat in the Social Credit landslide of that province in 1935.

The "progressive" movement of the twenties was essentially a protest movement, and soon faded. Too many of the elected representatives lacked insight or understanding of the forces at work in society; they had no unifying political philosophy and drifted back into the "old-line" camps. Some got patronage jobs, others were returned in subsequent elections as Liberal members. The "progressive" leader deserted as early as 1922 and now holds the cabinet

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<sup>11</sup>Regina Manifesto.

position of Minister of Mines and Resources in the present Liberal administration. A small number retained their independence and together with labor members formed the "Ginger Group" in Parliament. They worked valiantly through the years, breaking ground and preparing the soil for more systematic cultivation.

In the spring of 1932 the "Ginger Group" met under the leadership of Mr. Woodsworth to discuss the formation of a new federation to co-ordinate the work of the various existing farmer and labor parties, and on August 1st, 1932, representatives of Trade Unions, Labor, Farmer and Socialist political organizations, of the western provinces met in Calgary and formed the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation. This first Canadian attempt at union of urban and rural groups brought into sharp focus many varied viewpoints, from mild reformism to doctrinaire socialism, and showed the problems that had to be solved if success were to be achieved. After a hot debate a fourteen-point statement of objectives received unanimous approval, and was referred back to all constituent groups for study in preparation for the building and adoption of a more unified program. In Regina, Sask., in July 1933, the first National Convention of the CCF was held. Its main task was the adoption of a party program. Even though the National Council and constituent groups had debated the questions and had reached agreement on many of the major issues, each point of the program presented to the convention was thoroughly threshed out until agreement was reached. Out of this convention, however, emerged the now famous "Regina Manifesto," a comprehensive program and socialist philosophy for the people of Canada. To this day it stands without amendment as the basic governing document of the movement.

The strength of the party today rests on its broad democratic base as well as on the intelligent, devoted, self-sacrificing personnel that have emerged from its ranks as leaders. The basic units of the movement are local clubs which discuss local, national and international problems; send their recommendations along with delegates to annual Provincial Conventions or biennial National Conventions; raise funds by dues and subscriptions to maintain National and Provincial offices as well as form constituency organizations to nominate candidates for public office and fight elections. Membership is open to all who will accept the principles and policies laid down by the various conventions. In short, the CCF is a genuine people's

party: it is financed by its membership and affiliated organizations, in full realization that he who pays the piper calls the tune. The National Office, striving to serve the movement and coordinate the work from the national viewpoint, consists of the National Secretary-Treasurer, Assistant-Treasurer, Research Director, Parliamentary Assistant and three stenographers. It is responsible to an elected National Council which is the supreme governing body between conventions. The various provincial offices maintain secretaries and organizers in keeping with the strength of the party in their respective provinces, and publish weekly or bi-weekly papers. Much of the spade work, however, is carried on through volunteer effort.<sup>2</sup>

In Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Ontario the CCF forms the official opposition. It is best organized and strongest in the province of Saskatchewan, and is confident that at the next general election in that province it will be called upon to form the government. In British Columbia it holds sixteen of the forty-eight seats. The last general election gave the party the second largest group elected to the legislature and forced a coalition of the Liberal and Progressive-Conservative Parties. All eyes will be on Ontario to see the new group in action when that House meets the latter part of February. In Manitoba the CCF is the largest group outside the coalition government now in office. In Nova Scotia, where so far the greatest support has been from the miners in Cape Breton, three members from that area represent the CCF in a thirty-member legislature. Alberta, with nine years of Social Credit administration, has elected its first CCF member. As yet there is no representation in or from Quebec, New Brunswick or Prince Edward Island. However, popular support is growing and organizational work is being carried on.

In the Dominion Parliament (of 245 seats) the CCF now has eleven members. For a number of years independent observers have

<sup>2</sup>The Rev. Mr. Borgford, minister of the Church of Our Father (Unitarian) in Ottawa and the author of the present article, is chairman of the editorial committee of *News Comment*, the CCF national publication. The Rev. Angus Cameron of the Church of the Messiah in Montreal and the Rev. Norman Dowd, formerly Unitarian minister in Ottawa and Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Congress of Labor, are also members of the CCF. The Rev. Philip M. Pétursson, minister of the Unitarian Church of Winnipeg, was recently elected for the second time to the Winnipeg School Board on the CCF ticket. [Editor's Note.]

accorded them the distinction of being the effective, although not the official, opposition in Parliament. Three of the group, including the leader Mr. M. J. Coldwell, M. P., are teachers by profession, three ministers, three farmers, one coal miner and one a street railway motorman. All are tireless workers and good debaters. They devote their whole time, in session and out, to their constituencies and to the movement at large.

The working democratic conventions and councils continue to hammer out the frankly socialist, but not in any way doctrinaire, policies of the CCF. In a nation at war the CCF has advocated an all-out war effort, by which is meant the conscription of wealth and natural resources as well as of manpower; the nationalization and complete control of the essential war industries; nationalization and complete control of the essential war industries; nationalization of financial institutions; replacement of all dollar-a-year men by full-time administrators paid by the state; 100% tax on all profits in excess of 4% return on capital actually invested; fair maximum incomes with 100% tax on all above the set figure; compulsory interest free loans as a means of war-financing. The CCF has opposed, and will continue to oppose, conscription of men for military service unless and until there is a simultaneous conscription of wealth. In Parliament and out, the CCF has been the champion of the worker and farmer in the struggle for adequate minimum incomes and security provisions. It has fought hard against the tendency towards the development of private monopolies and cartels. The most notable example of this struggle was the unveiling of the facts behind the Aluminum deal, at the last session of Parliament. These disclosures showed how, by means of allowing the sale of the product at exorbitant prices and permitting tax dodging by means of accelerated depreciation, the Government of Canada, in conjunction with other United Nations Governments, was providing the capital for extensive developments wholly owned by the private interests.

Canadian citizens are definitely turning to the CCF in ever greater numbers. As the strength of the party grows, and because of its frank determination to make basic changes when the people elect it to office, the opposition of the exploiting vested interests becomes more vocal and violent. Every word uttered by CCF officers and elected representatives is carefully scrutinized by the enemies of progress and no opportunity for misrepresentation is overlooked. The

councils of manufacturing, banking, big business, insurance institutions and associations are anxiously concerned over the development of this people's movement. This past year the annual reports of these organizations have been in large measure devoted to blasts against the CCF. Editorials in leading newspapers from coast to coast, which were formerly infrequent and mildly derisive, are now frequent and hysterical. But no evil has come to Canada or will come through the CCF. The people are simply removing the blinding scales from their eyes. The many are seeing what pawns they have been for the few, and are accepting the obligations as well as the privileges of a democracy. They are determined to build the Co-operative Commonwealth.

# Religion and Humanity

SIDNEY S. ROBINS

Almost any bystander feels authorized to rebuke those people who claim to be religious but justify the claim only by participating in a Sabbath ritual, or by merely repeating a creed, or observing the letter of the moral law while neglecting its spirit. We recognize that the conventionalized forms of piety often make the best display, but we know they are not the real thing.

Then why is it that our historians of religion are so conventional in approach to other religions than our own? Why is it that in studying primitive societies they put so much stress upon public rites, taboos, and theological signposts? If an aborigine has some wooden images, or if he practices magic exorcisms or expiations, or if he avoids one kind of meat, these things are practically sure to be seized upon as representing his religion. The rest of the human picture often remains a vague sort of fringe, if it appears at all.

Possibly two brief perspectives on religion which do not altogether yield to this tendency to conventionalize the subject may suggest another approach.

In Friess and Schneider's *Religions in Various Cultures*, one finds the authors saying: "To the mind of primitive man the term (religion) is foreign, because what we regard as his religion is to him a part of his history, agriculture, politics, science and art." Well then, in an important way the primitive man is very much like the more thoughtful modern; for the latter also thinks that, to be real, religion must pervade the whole of life. Seemingly there is an alliance between backward races and some moderns against a certain way of conventionalizing the matter. Perhaps we may think that the uncivilized, in failing to have a religion separate from their other interests, are more rightly oriented than those civilized observers who find one based upon a complicated theology, and who proceed to describe in detail its rites and beliefs.

In any case it is easy to see that this conventional approach can be followed out only in the study of other people's religion, and the further off the better! We are often led to comment that nobody can possibly draw as clear-cut a picture as that of *our* religion. Ours does not consist of an image or speaking-likeness of

God and a nice map of our ceremonial obligations. On the contrary, with us the less clearly defined part may be the more important.

In Auguste Sabatier's *Philosophy of Religion* we find another interesting remark to the effect that the word "religion" comes to us from the least religious people who ever lived, the Romans; and that neither the Greeks nor the Germans (both of which peoples Sabatier admires from the standpoint of their intellectual vigor) has any synonym for it. He might have added that the Romans were probably the most conventional people that ever lived. Those of their race from whom compilers of modern scriptures or religious readings make selections—Cicero, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius—were by the Romans themselves thought of as philosophers; hardly as religious men at all. Meantime "religions" were something to be collected, and the Romans did collect them by the dozen from all over the world. Gibbon suggests that they were looking for good side-shows to surround the main-drag, where the theme was politics.

On the whole, in taking over the word "religion" from the Romans, we may have taken over too much of the notion that religion can be a subordinate interest. They gave the foremost place to the state, just as Rosenberg and Hitler do today. They "worshipped" the emperor, as a symbol. But their collecting habits allowed foreigners to suppose that a "religion" could be something other than one's deepest business in life.

It seems pretty obvious that conventionality in the science of religions has had bad consequences. As indulged in by anthropologists like Sir J. G. Frazer, for example, it focuses our attention upon features of primitive life, which, administered to the mind in large doses, are neither nutritive nor digestible. And people are driven away from the study.

For all the details about charms, amulets and fetishes; about spirits friendly and hostile; about gods of bewildering form and nature—gods with animal heads or with many heads, gods with animal or human bodies, gods who are monarchs over specific realms of nature, gods fuzzy with a down of misty appellations and ascriptions, gods prickly with all sorts of contradictory attributes—, perhaps we might substitute a brief statement that in general men fancy gods according to their momentarily conscious needs, and

that there is no beginning or end to such fancies. A little illustrative material of the conventional sort may be useful to have gone through with once, provided it is handled with a shovel, to give the broad effect, instead of with tongs or forceps to give dignity to details and local peculiarities.

But surely it is more important to know what needs men have felt, and to be led to reflect about what human needs are more important, permanent and universal. One may or may not hold the pragmatic philosophy of William James, to the effect that fundamental needs of human beings at least suggest a basis in the cosmic background. But it might be an interesting fact if it turned out that human beings have generally held such a pragmatic philosophy,—that is, in their subconscious instincts.

As to the rites and ceremonies of savages, perhaps one may be allowed to feel that the medicine man's antics at corn-planting time, or when a pest is to be exorcised, have very little specifically religious significance. They do illustrate an interesting pre-scientific approach in such matters. On the other hand, social ceremonies concerned with getting ready for battle, or initiation into tribal traditions and mores, may be religiously much more significant. They show man's deep need of social objectives to inspire him, as well as the actual psychological fact of social reenforcement, upon which, in due time, are founded synagogue and church.

It is where anthropologists stress the differences in human nature instead of the unity that they seem to waste a lot of their time. If we begin by discovering the common human nature of peoples—as we usually can in the case of contemporary foreigners, by living with them awhile—it is impossible to stand off and merely think of their religion: "How odd it is!" The other approach does lead us to formulate that kind of comment. It precludes sympathetic imagination, and induces the frame of mind which eventually gets out on a limb and saws itself off from the tree of humanity.

The people who spend much of their time showing us how odd are the religions of the various tribes of men are to a great extent supported by the philosophers and popular writers on the topic of religion. When these do not identify religion with cosmological arguments for the existence of God, or church systems, or sacred moral formulas, they still conventionalize it by discussing naturalism and supernaturalism, modernism and fundamentalism, theism

and atheism—as if these ill-defined slogans represented the warp of the fabric instead of interwoven stripe-patterns. People are set apart from each other and from us by their religion: that is still the picture. Religious people are *peculiar* people. Our critic is quite likely to find that the ideally religious people belong either to the distant past, the distant future, or Never Never Land. That is to say, he regards religion as something outworn (although still on the stage), as something the world may be converted to some day, or as a pipe-dream. In any case it is not a universal force that covers the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Behind all this conventionalizing is a tendency that is the reverse of catholic and universal, a tendency to fragmentation of the human outlook. The people who conventionalize other people's religion quite often hold there is no such thing as religion; only religions. They are quite likely to combine that doctrine with the idea that there is no such thing as education; only different kinds of education for different purposes. They very probably hold that there is no such thing as *human nature* (to serve as the basis of ethical idealism); only different kinds of tastes and drives and pleasures and pains.

Much of this attitude is due to a nominalistic tendency in the outlook we have absorbed during the scientific period, which tendency takes form in a suspicion of general ideas and general terms. This prejudice is in part a wholesome one, bringing with it carefulness in the observation of fields which may have many differences of aspect, warding off that misty vagueness of undefined terms upon which semanticists have recently pounced so hard. But the implacable hostility to general or universal concepts has underground affiliations with scattering of efforts and fragmentation of life.

Certainly we have since the Middle Ages been undergoing a *Zersplitterung* (that is to say, in the same graphic language, a splitting up or splintering) not only of Christianity, but also of social vision and human ideals. The Neo-Mediaevalists and Neo-Thomists are not the only ones who are conscious of this fact. The multitudinous Protestant sects, the new German religion of race and blood, the proliferating cults of our great cities, are merely the first illustrations that come to mind. We are painfully conscious of our division from one another as human beings. The Ecumenical Conference at Oxford, the Third International, the feeble League

of Nations of the past years, the Four Freedoms and all the earnest search among the thoughtful for foundations of lasting peace after victory, even the recent demand for more integration in college education, are all of them but rush-lights—so far—shining against the dark background of our departmentalized ideals. The need of our age is a consciousness of the unity of humanity in ideal, and a growing organization of that ideal.

It would seem that a discussion of religion behind religions, and incidentally behind or above this fragmentation of ideals, might be very apropos just now.

First aid to the discrimination of religion in the midst of its own sectarianisms probably involves a broad preliminary observation, to wit: There seem to be three typical lines along which anything can be, and is, defined—whether it be science, art, religion, the New Deal, communism, democracy or almost anything of importance. There is (1) the highly individualistic definition and use of the term; (2) the conventional and institutional; (3) the universal, which is based upon a principle of unlimited scope.

Let us take “liberalism” for example. First there is the highly individualistic interpretation of the term. We find it in politicians who call themselves liberal with hardly any other justification than a personal fondness for the term and an unwillingness to be called conservatives or moss-backs or die-hards. President Roosevelt once said of Senator Walter George that by no stretch of the imagination could he conceive of him as a liberal. The senator resented the statement. There was arbitrariness somewhere. And this kind of arbitrariness is not negligible fact; it is too common and important in public discussions. One sees no more hope of keeping people from appropriating the term “liberal” on purely personal grounds and utilities than of keeping Hitler and Stalin from claiming that their respective regimes are more genuinely democratic than ours in America. There is a point of view which simply flouts any mutual or universal standards. All along the line, that is our trouble just now with the Nazis.

In the second place there is the popular and conventional use of the term liberalism which, in religion for example, makes it the denominational or party fold of Modernists, Unitarians, Universalists, Humanists. The label is allowed as the birthright of some of these, who thereupon are set in clear opposition to certain other

groups. In this way the name Liberal (with a large L) is attached to many people that it would be highly flattering to call liberal in another sense which is always present in our subconsciousness. A college president was telling of hearing a Liberal minister discuss the Oxford Conference's "Program for Christianity" in a sermon. He said that upon first announcement of the topic of the sermon he expected "a typical piece of liberal condescension." He expected the preacher to see nothing good in the Oxford Conference because Liberals were not leaders in it. He said he was greatly pleased when the sermon turned out to be genuinely broad-minded, stressing contributions as well as scoring absurdities of the Conference. Indeed, religious or political party-labels never tell the whole story. In the conventional sense all European nations at the turn of the present century were Christian.

The third and genuinely philosophical, or perhaps we might risk saying genuinely scientific, meaning of liberalism must have to do with this very broad-mindedness which our college president was surprised to find in the Liberal preacher. An open mind and the scientific approach to problems constitute liberalism in the most scientific sense.

To make a briefer example of the three kinds of definition in the case of "science": Representing the individualistic approach, here is Christian Science, whose claim to the second half of its name is not generally allowed, to say the least. But we have heard of no law against the name, any more than against free application of superlatives in movie-ads. Also we believe there are "sciences" penetrable to the rays of ordinary reason. In the second or conventional sense, science is what fills the library shelves, under the Dewey classification system, from, let us say, numbers five hundred to seven hundred. There are separate alcoves for physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, and so on. The scientific wing of the library may include in its stacks a considerable proportion of outworn theory, plenty of inaccurate observation and inadequate experimentation, and quite a little unguarded inference. But conventionally it is all science; it is all in the right fields, on the right subjects.

We are being more thoughtful, though probably still conventional, when we identify science with experimental procedures which are set up just to solve certain kinds of problems and to arrive at mechanical laws for the anticipation and control of phenomena of

nature. This meaning of science is firmly established in the age in which we live; but, in effect, it restricts the demand for careful and methodical inquiry to phenomena which admit of exact experimentation. As a matter of fact, scarcely any scientist is satisfied to get along with a definition of science which leaves any real problems entirely outside the scientific field.

In the third sense of the word science, it is the method of careful and rigorous investigation and logical thinking. It is as exact, empirical and experimental as the subject-matter permits of; but it is the only intelligent method of dealing with any problems that we are prepared to discuss at all. Of course it includes philosophy.

Now turn to the three perspectives on religion! First, the word has been considerably used in a sense that positively encourages individualism. Often we say that a man is making a religion of some hobby of his. The Latin etymology of the word suggests idiosyncracy: religion is "that which binds." It is a question of any real devotion of time, of self, to an objective interest. So a man can make a religion of anything he is in earnest about; be it collecting stamps, or playing golf, or working for the party, or correcting other people's grammar.

In the directly opposite, the conventional sense—which registers a social interest in getting things quickly classified and arranged so that you can deal with them collectively—, religion is the public or traditional institutions of church, synagogue, rites, creeds, Mosaic code, Bible, shovel hat, and the rest. Local environment partly determines the picture; but, for illustration, if a man from Mars asked us what religion is, the response from this point of view might very well be to indicate a steeple or two and suggest that he look under them on a Sunday morning and observe what goes on there. Also that he should make special note of the gentlemen who pass the plates, and follow them out into weekday life to find out about religion as applied in business. Social patterns and common denominators have their importance. On the whole the "run of the mine" in religious matters is probably more significant than the run of the unsocial mind.

In the third sense, religion must be something universal, must serve some universal purpose or use. That is the suggestion of our analogies. What is there that goes beyond both the idols of the cave and the idols of the tribe? Obviously nothing but the human

or divine. In certain philosophies (those of Plato and Descartes for example) human and divine mean very much the same thing. Man's real nature is rational, and so is of God. In the Old Testament we are told that man was made in the image of God. The word human then is a neutral word in theology. So what can universal religion be but faith in, and earnest pursuit of, those goals which as human beings we ought to be in earnest about? If humanity is something universal, then religion is something universal. It is the complex and range of interests that complement one another and help a man to function as a human being and possibly as a child of God. It is the passion and drive for ideal human attainment or happiness; the experience or foretaste of these things; the faith in their possibility; the reverence before prophets who exemplify them attractively.

One knows very well that this definition of religion in terms of a universal human functioning will by some be thought so vague or question-begging as to come to very little upon further appraisal. It is idealistic rather than actual, some will say. Well, so is the most scientific definition of science; for this does not defend everything that goes on in the scientific church. By some it will be thought that phrases like "functioning as a human being" should be entirely left out of any scientific or philosophical approach to religion; and that objection will probably reflect a reductive naturalistic, or materialistic, philosophy. But others will feel that while we certainly do not know in full detail what is our human function, or calling, and have in any case to grow into it, we nevertheless do know something about it. We have a sense of direction and a root of loyalty.

Probably the conviction that there is a universal meaning to religion, and, behind that, such a thing as *human living* or humanity, rests in first instance upon a personal impression of life. And probably that has been built up out of a thousand and one detailed experiences, and has something of the character of an aesthetic judgment. In fact, it may be doubted whether most philosophies of life are reached as conclusions from a formal argument.

But there are considerations of a broader sort, objective considerations, to suggest that there is such a universal meaning of religion. All the great religious traditions have at points risen above the tribal into some vague notion of the human. Many of them

have stressed a human predicament and a universal need of salvation. We might as well assume that some religions are more advanced than others; and the most developed ones, Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity, have the strongest sense of humanity as a fact beyond the strife of tribes.

It also seems an obvious fact that salvation from meaningless life, and stimulus to vitality beyond the merely physical, is what the great past leaders of religion and the best modern representatives of it have had to give. The fact that Christianity has set the definition of religion as Life, spiritual life we may say, upon one of its high hills—namely the gospel of John—is a suggestion that we have picked up no blind trail.

In some degree, vitality is what even the conventional and individualistic religions give. That is to be expected. Rosenberg's religion obviously provides many with a kind of burning enthusiasm. But if there is any reason for resisting Rosenberg and Hitler, it is because we regard them as parodies of a human standard which is clear and objective enough to condemn them. This standard includes love of truth. It does not poison or put slush into the wells of knowledge. It is beyond the idols of race or tribe.

But someone asks, Why call the sort of human idealism and vitality that you are now talking about by a name so conventionalized and spoiled as religion? Have not undertakers and hair-dressers become morticians and beauticians to improve their business?

Perhaps indeed it is more important that we should agree upon *some* name, and provide ourselves with some verbal handle to an idealistic faith, than it is what that name shall be. There is obviously something here which requires a name. The word religion has sometimes been used in the required sense; and, if one is to talk logic of names, it seems illogical that terms like liberalism and education and science should be given scientific as well as conventional meanings, and the same extension of service disallowed to "religion." Doubtless the real reasons are less logical and technical than that. Some of them are mere sentiment perhaps. But the practical ones seem compelling.

Undoubtedly there are those who would put all their idealism into science in general, or sociology in particular, or education, or aesthetics, or politics. But all these other terms appear too specific

and limiting in their nature to occupy the place and fill the shoes of religion.

To universal science, which includes theology and philosophy, belongs the business of knowing the truth; but no mere intellectual pursuit or "pure science" can well take the place of religion. The business of forecasting ideals for society belongs to politics, in the nobler sense of that word; but religion is personal and natural or cosmic, as well as social. To education belong the fields of technical and professional training; but when the question of the objective of all education is reached the subject becomes hyphenated. Education already creeps over towards the field of religious education. The reason so much philosophy of education beats the air is that it does not at once get out the old catechism and raise the old question about the chief end of man. There is no real philosophy of education this side of that misty border of religion upon which educational thought ever impinges, but hesitates to cross with its impedimenta of technical baggage. In the universal sense, education can only be religious-education; education to the full, the real, human living.

The world of aesthetics constitutes a special field ordinarily; and consequently to attempt to make the pursuit of beauty replace religion as the idealizing force is to run the risk of an entangling alliance with flowing neckwear and long hair, or their spiritual counterparts. Generally speaking, it is only when the sense and the pursuit of beauty are carried into a field where the average professional artist does not want them carried, that aesthetics begins to serve the universal human purpose. Dante, Michaelangelo, Ruskin, some of the poets, find the beauty they would celebrate in human life and character, or in dreams of it; but their company is often resented by the professional aesthetes as a group. These would like to limit aesthetics, in harmony with the word's etymology, to physical objects and their effect upon us through the senses. Those who deal in fair visions of social Utopias, or of the Kingdom of God on Earth, are certainly poets (creators); but they would have even less standing in an art-exhibit than Dante with his dream-woman. It is only across a barricade that art comes to serve the religious function. Some of the arts were great in the Middle Ages because they were focussed upon the comprehensive aim of human life as then understood. And a good deal of modern art

is lacking in greatness because it is not about very much of anything; it is no longer a celebration of the beauty of God, or a servant of beauty in human living.

We must either give up the real significance of religion or else find some universal statement of it such as we find for science when it attains the dignity of being a method. Meanwhile it really does appear that men the world over are possessed, in rudimentary or intelligent form, of a will to live, a will toward a place in the sun, a will to develop and grow into their possibilities of significant life,—which is the basis even of all disillusionment. They have this along with a faith that they or their race are called by nature or God to such ends; and, again, along with attendant experiences of satisfaction and confirmation punctuated by defeat and disillusionment.

As to those defeats, we may well recall Socrates' opinion about the important distinction between what we want and what we think we want. That difference of itself spells a prodigious amount of disillusionment while we are becoming intelligent about our wants and needs. On the other hand, it appears that on the whole defeat is least final in the best of men. Said Dr. Edward Everett Hale, "Live with all your might, and you shall have more might with which to live."

It is not to the average scientist but to Darwin, Pasteur, Maxwell, Rutherford and the like, that we look for the embodiment of the scientific method and ideal. Even so it is not to the mass but to the prophets and seers that we should look for the best illustrations of a religion that goes beyond disillusionment. It is they who impart the religious spirit and sense, and that is their importance in history. We touch their garments and are healed. As Phillips Brooks once suggested, the meaning of religious faith is "sharing the vitality of another."

As in hours of national crisis the hopes and faith of a people seem to cluster around a leader or two, so the sense of the meaning and value of human life develops normally from the beginning through a series of discipleships: to the captain or coach of a ball-team, a log-school teacher who makes knowledge interesting, a political leader, a champion of social reform. Finally we are dependent upon the best and completest of men; they furnish the abiding light in the deep places. We may use a New Testament metaphor for the

function of religious leaders: they are lighted candles set upon a hill-top. It is a historic fact that the greater religions feature discipleship to founders.

Nor is this reading of religious history anti-democratic in its bearing. It does show where *Führer* and *Duce* fit into the scheme of things. It is clearly possible to kindle various passions of human nature without awakening humanity. The most unfortunate passions and affections are parodies of the best. Patriotism is not only "the last refuge of a scoundrel"; but also a very noble passion, in noble men. The end or use of really great men is to set other men on their own feet by stimulation; and that is their effect. They kindle the most personal or individual reactions and open the widest horizons. Religion is primarily first-hand, not second; although it typically begins in discipleship.

Religion is the affirmation of the significance of human life, and the passion and struggle for its completeness. That makes it the democratic force *par excellence*. And morality, when we leave tribal mores behind, is simply the expression of religion in conduct—of whatever religion a person has. The only reason for acting like a man is that you are a man in potentiality. The basis and standard of ethics is that goal of living which the Greeks called the Good of Goods (*summum bonum* in Latin); what Jesus called the Pearl of Great Price or the Kingdom of Heaven (when it is within); what St. John calls Life. Religion surrounds ethics as a man's whole attitude and orientation surrounds his deeds.

It is the universal factor in religions, or religion itself, which centralizes Christianity for many moderns upon some of the great pages of the Johannine gospel. The universal Christ is a giver of life. This Christ Mr. Gandhi, a non-Christian, can see without let or hindrance. John expressed the power of this Christ variously by saying that he came to bring life, eternal life, the life abundant.

And how can anyone say that this idea of religion is too vague or ideal? Surely it has not always failed either in being pragmatically understood or in affecting the deeds of human beings. Do we not hear on all sides that the sin of so-called Christian civilization is in putting material values above human values? Well, with St. John we have found the universal aim of religion in human values.

The proper investigation for the history of religions is various peoples' ideals of human life, based upon their sense of needs; and

their experiences in seeking, forgetting and enlarging their own ideals. Any lesser question held in the foreground leads to desiccation of the subject. When the approach to religious history exhibits a conventional or local notion of what religion is, the result is that, with one accord, we begin to neglect that history.

In the history of religion, material belonging to partizans of some narrower interest should be handed over, or assigned, where in first instance it belongs. Superstitions belong on the whole more to the history of science than to that of religion. Rituals and forms of "worship" belong in first instance to artists and literary men and antiquarians. Taboos belong probably to the history of psychology. The first chapters of *Genesis* belong, along with Dante and Milton, to drama.

About the ancients, primitive or civilized in a degree, the religious questions are: What did they think they needed? What notions of humanity had they arrived at? What did they think was the end of education? What difference was there in their time between the fundamentalists and the intelligentsia on these same questions? What did they do with that sense of sin or failure which is probably universal? How did their ideas on all these matters develop as time goes on?

As for ourselves, obviously that hope which we cannot forgo, of a better and more peaceful world, is dependent upon a growing sense of the unity of mankind—in its nature or common needs, in its ideals, and in its political organization. The dream of this is the continuation of the dream of religious seers from Isaiah and Jesus, through Augustine, to Gandhi and a galaxy of modern spiritual leaders. The lion and the lamb lying down together, the Kingdom of God on Earth, the City of God, the Christian Utopias, are the imaginative background of faith in the possibility of an actualized Humanity. We can hardly afford to ignore religion as a potent energy that has kindled and kept alive the hope of that coming day.

On their side, religious organizations and sects can best play their part in the future by teaching, above all the other things, a gospel of Humanity. The word that the world's humiliated peoples need from our churches is the word and the earnest of a common humanity and a Spirit within all.

# The Myth of Love

KENNETH L. PATTON

It might be said that all men live by a myth. That is a strange admission coming from one who has found the term "myth" highly objectionable. The word has been used by theologians and proponents of race religions with much abandon, so I must reserve the right to define myth to my own liking and insist on certain conditions to be met.

What is a myth? One dictionary defines it as "a legend, a traditional story, often founded upon some fact of nature, or an event in the early history of a people, and embodying some religious belief of that people." I think we should remember that no myth, when it is alive and functioning, is held by the people to be "mythical" as we commonly use that word. Invariably the religious opinions of other people to which we do not ascribe are myths, while our own beliefs are the gospel truth. The Greek mythology did not seem weird and unrealistic to the common man of Greece. For him the gods really lived on Mount Olympus, with their love affairs, rivalries and jealousies. The trinity, the good and bad angels, satan, heaven and hell were not and are not mythology to millions of believers. They are seen and felt as the indubitable world, the real world; they have that ring of reality and satisfactoriness which the living, vital myth must have. They are believed; they elicit faith.

I must insist above all on this feeling of reality associated with a man's living myth. It rings a bell in him. It is the way he thinks; it is logical; it makes sense. It is the way he feels; it pictures forth the world to him. It is the way he dreams, for it gives an explanation for all the dreams and growth of the past, and it offers an assurance that the world can support his further dreaming.

There are men today who insist that we must have a myth to live by, but they would go back and disinter one of the dead myths, or give a shot in the arm to one that is fast dying. They seem to think that the only effective myths are the old ones, and no adequate faith and belief can be born from the body of our own age with its new knowledge and new needs. They would reinterpret

the old words and concepts, but I have a grave fear that their creation will turn out to be a Frankensteinian monster. The dead should be left in its grave, not have a new mind grafted into the old body that it can stumble on its way of destruction.

Into the myth by which men are coming to live today there have been injected some new qualities or tendencies. They have been intimated in the past but never before have they so decisively forced themselves on our attention. One of these tendencies is the increasing dependence of man on science for his opinion of himself and his universe. The Greek philosophers made brave guesses. The seers wrote their stories of the beginning and the cosmic struggle between the divine and satanic forces of the universe in great epics, but until yesterday man had little to go on but what he could see with his near-sighted eyes and construct through fertile imagination. In our functional life we have substituted the meteorologist's scientific forecast of the weather for the ceremonial rain-dance. No matter how we may keep on saying the old words, such radical revision in our practical techniques cannot help but deeply alter the actual myth by which we live.

While we have learned to depend on science we have also learned that we must hold our myths as provisional. They may seem right to us now, but we are well aware that tomorrow may find them unsatisfactory. Therefore we are no longer so inclined to invite the challenger of our myths to drink hemlock, or nail him to a cross, at least not in some countries. We actually listen with interest and eagerness to those who tear down our old beliefs, and often we are too quick to change over to the first new answer that comes along.

Our myth today should try to make rational to us three things: man's cultural and evolutionary history, the mass of data afforded us by scientific investigation, and our own natures with our insatiable desires for satisfaction today and a fighting chance for better things tomorrow. A man's myth is the result of his attempt to make sense out of his life and his world.

What I here offer may be called a myth because much of this construction is based on conjecture, inference, hope and faith. Our knowledge of the universe is something like a mystery story of which only the first chapter has been written. We have only the clues found in a few pages. The key to the whole dilemma may be already revealed; there may be unnumbered clues yet to appear, and it may

be the whole tale will become more and more mystifying the further we delve into it. We turn on all the lights we have, but even then our faith is a leap in the dark which lies beyond our small circle of illumination. With all our data we live by fiction as well as by fact. The fiction has the benefit of all the logic and reasonableness that we possess, but we cannot live within the small area of the safe and sure; we venture forth into the unknown, the maybe, the hope-to-be. That venturesome idea is our living myth.

You may find grave deficiencies in the myth I live by. It may fail to satisfy your need for security, meaning and purpose in life and nature. It may seem unreasonable and foolish to you. Any man must at last trust his own intuition as to what is reasonable. We have little control over our minds. If we think something reasonable or unreasonable we just do, and that is about all there is to it. If our feelings flow out to one thing rather than to another, there is little to do but let them flow.

Every man owns a living myth. The thought and feeling of the common man are often discredited, and very unfairly. I have never met the man who did not have his serious moments and his grave questions, and who had not phrased some sort of answer to them. Often it was as good, if not better, than the answer coming from the involved logic of some expert in thought. Involved and tricky thinking does not necessarily indicate wisdom, if it ever does. Too many details can obscure the larger realities.

Many myths begin with a story of the beginning of things, the creation. I do not believe there ever was a beginning or a creation. The physical universe always has existed and always will. Scientific studies indicate tremendous time spans behind us and there is no reason to believe that the succession of events which we call time is not unlimited backwards as it seems to be forwards. It is harder for me to imagine a material universe being created out of the void than to just assume that it always has been here.

Let our minds run down that road for a minute, over spaces through which weave the many galaxies of stars and planets, back through millions, billions, quadrillions of years, endless vistas of time, time enough for things to have happened over and over again an endless number of times. How many times has some little corner of the universe been so situated that life could develop on it? Surely other suns have their satellites, and sometime in the infinite past this

drama, or a similar one, has been enacted before. Look down the road of the future, flux and change, on and on eternally. Many more chances will come; even though life be snuffed out on this earth, the struggle will not cease and the universe will evolve to live and breathe again.

Such is the cosmic vista in which my myth finds its setting, the background for the green history of our little earth and the proud adventure of man.

As I look I cannot help asking the question, "Why?" Why has not the universe run down ages since, all the stars burnt to cinders, their wheeling ceased, the last flicker of fire died out and the whole expanse subsided into inertia, death and darkness? Why has not all matter grown tired and gone to sleep? Why has not all desire ended and all growth stopped?

The answer lies in the fact that there can be no such thing as dead matter. It only appears to be dead. We look around a room. Everything seems stable and enduring; the chairs and tables, the window-glass, the curtains, the walls seem so secure, harmless and at peace. But how deceiving are outward appearances. We know that a slow fire is eating within all these things. The wood and cloth are slowly rotting; the glass is growing brittle; even the metal is growing fatigued and rusting away. It is not dead. It is in a constant, if slow, unrest and change. If a spark of fire suddenly increases the tempo of the burning, all our safety and security, these dead things, will blaze into an inferno, leaving us only dust and ashes. And the very dust and ashes will rot and change, and burn again, given the chance. Or if sown on the soil, they will grow into green, breathing plants and living bodies.

Scientists tell us that matter may be energy itself. If so, then it is nonsense to talk of the universe running down. Energy may change and vary itself, but it will always be activity and power.

We see the stars, planets and nebulae surging up and down the great seas of space eternally, in tireless alteration. Is not this madness, this meaningless display of activity? Is this not a worse picture than a final ceasing, which at least would have the aspect of peace about it? The answer is that it is not aimless. There is a direction, a drift, a tendency to this great display. I would give it the name of love.

The tragic fallacy of endowing the physical world with human

emotions should not be encouraged, but the de-emotionalizing of the universe can be overdone. We must remember that the feelings and thoughts of men are the feelings and thoughts of the material world. We are nothing but dust feeling and thinking. There is nothing in us that is not there. We must ask ourselves where our emotions, our hunger and thirst, our need to grow, to experience, to love, to dream, to struggle came from. From where else did it come than from the material that composes us? In a simpler form, in potentiality, it is in the elements of nature. The difference in intensity and depth arises out of our complexity as against the comparative simplicity of the atom. By becoming parts of the incredibly complex, many-celled, many-fibered, many-organized body of man, the cravings and appetites of matter are heightened and made expressive. Through union they become able to manifest themselves, to speak out and work out.

As long as we remember that the small particles of matter do not love in the manner that we do, it may not be unjustified to say that the atom has love and faith. There is ambition and unrest, a driving urge to be more than it can be alone. It is driven up the road of increasing complexification, into more involved and unstable elements, into more complex molecules, into the marvelous structure of the cell, where it loses its identity and control over itself and becomes part of an organism, into part of a cell that is part of an organ, which in turn is part of the body of a man. And the dark, gritty, humble dirt becomes warm, rosy flesh; it sings and loves and builds. If love is not in the simplest matter, in some rudimentary but yet vital and all-important way, how does it ever get into us?

The universe is a love affair, and the long story of evolution is the romance of nature. A terribly patient and long-suffering love is this which has driven in growth to a plane of consciousness and self-knowledge in man. Patience is an ever-present element in true love. We see it in human mothers; they cling to their faith and hope in their children, nursing the invalid, patient with the retarded, sacrificing that the normal child may have a chance. The universe teaches us the greatest lesson of patience. For millions of years the material which is the earth whirled through space, flaming gas or boiling matter, or whatever its form, until it was thrown out from the sun to circle about it, to slowly cool, to gather its atmosphere, to evolve the conditions that permitted life to develop. During

more millions of years life has slowly climbed to us. What a brave, never-dying love this is. Through defeats, blind-alleys, death to whole species, trials and errors, waste, profligacy, deviousness, yet slowly and doggedly it has kept on. It has run off into thousands of channels and forms, peopling the earth with millions of kinds of creatures and plants, each species a product and possessing agent of this fever and love for growth and life.

It may be felt that I have been arbitrary in my definition of love. To me love is of the stuff of growth. Growth occurs through the joining together of previously separate elements into a new and more creative unity. The attraction which joins them together is love. It is the force of cohesion or togetherness. Love is the glue of nature. Whether it unites a group of atoms into a molecule or a group of men into a society it is the same force, coextensive through the whole repertoire of nature.

Nature's patience has extended to man, allowing him even the mistake of wholesale self-destruction. The race has been forgiven even though the individual has been punished. We may not be always forgiven and allowed an endless succession of chances. Other species have perished because they could not adapt and adjust. But the odds are in our favor, at least for the near future. There is no real reason to think we have reached the end of the line, when so many factors indicate that we are just at the beginning of the adaptation of intelligent, conscious creatures to their universe. We should find hope in the deathless love that has driven us this far and which should not cease now, which will carry us farther. We should not forget that each baby born into the world affords man an opportunity to begin again, gives us a fresh, enlivening start. Death and birth are a great wisdom and blessing to life.

We once had the idea that the earth was the center of the universe. Now we know the earth is a small scrap swinging about a second-rate star in one of thousands of galaxies. Does this mean that man is not important in the story of nature? We might even say that in a new way, in this new myth, man is still the center of his universe, and by far the most important part of it. If the earth is no longer quantitatively the center, it still might carry the qualitative peak of universal existence.

Which is greatest, the sun, seething ball of gaseous matter, or man who can see and measure and understand the sun? One man is

of more moment, qualitatively speaking, than the nebulae of Andromeda in which our sun would be less than is a grain of sand to the earth. They are just more of the same material which composes us, and we seem to be much farther long the road of the universe's seeking. As far as we know, we are the last and highest fruitage of the love and dream of all being. Man might one day become the steersman of the universe, the rider of not only this small planet, but of the whole expanse. Millions of years ago the cooling crust of the earth gave little promise of such as we. Even so we cannot see the farther outcome of our growth. When we have done so much in a few thousand years, what might we not do in the next few million years, which shall be ours if we have the will and wit to use them? So, in this myth, man again becomes the center of the universe, "the darling of the stars."

There is a very different interpretation in this myth, however, than in others which saw God protecting and cozening man. It is not the universe outside man that forgives him and sustains him, but the continuing stream of his own being. It is that part of nature which is man himself in which lies his sustenance and strength. Forgiveness is built into his blood stream in the white corpuscles which destroy the wreckers which would destroy him, in the coagulating of the blood and the healing of the flesh, in the ability of his organism to adapt itself, and the ability of his mind to improve his conditions and forestall disaster. It is the earth which sustains man, but the essential element is the earth within man rather than outside him.

It is true that man cannot live without air, water and sunshine, but he has adapted himself to them, not they to him. He has eyes because there was first light, teeth because he must chew food, lungs because there was first air. These were not created for his benefit, nor are they friendly to him. He has put them to his own use. The light will blind him and burn him to death. The food may poison him. The water may drown him. They feel no obligation or love toward man. The universe outside man does not recognize that he is the pinnacle of the dream and the growing edge of creation. Within it he has evolved with great pain and patience, but it is careless and unknowing of him, and might snuff him out in a blind and tragic collision of astral bodies. Its hunger and love are blind and groping, unconscious, or, as in the animals, in varying degrees of consciousness. Nowhere but in man does it seem to have come to self-knowledge and self-appreciation.

Man can love and appreciate his universe, but he cannot expect it to return his affection. Man can speak out his mind and cry his prayers, but no voice will answer him except his own. Nature will react to him in its particular form. The atom has its behaviors, and the molecule, and the amoeba, and the tree, and the ant, and the mouse, and the dog, and the man. Each must be known for what it is, and for the measure and kind of cooperation and affection it can afford man. The dog and the horse can be taught to share somewhat in man's intelligent behavior and become participants with him in society. But the mind of man will have to assume full dictatorship over the test-tube and the crucible. The gross material world must be enslaved and brought to obey the will and the mind of man.

Only if the universe were itself an organism, as is man, could men have personal relations with it, for personal relations are a two-way action between persons. There is no personality organization within the stars and unliving matter. They obey the more mechanistic laws of physics and chemistry. Each particle is a small organism within itself, but the whole is not an organism, except as in man where the whole is composed of the many lesser organisms of matter. The universe is one in that it is all composed of like substance, but it is not one body possessed of a mind and a heart that can answer the mind and heart of man.

The universe can be made into answering beings, however. This we do when we bring a child into the world where no child was before; we turn the earth into men and women through the mysterious power of life within us. In our fellow beings the universe answers the sound of our lips and warms to the warmth of our affection.

Such is, as I see it, the myth of love. Now love is engaged on a new adventure, the social adventure. This advance has been indicated in colonies of ants, hives of bees, herds of animals, where many separate creatures become one larger body, a society working and building together. In the insects and animals this cooperation is instinctive, built into their nervous systems, but not so in man. Human society can be and partly is a larger body of interfunctioning persons, but each person has a mind of his own. Labor is carried on individually and collectively; society grows both in its parts and in its whole. A world of promise lies before the new expression of love within the universe, the society of man. Growth is now not limited to the development of more efficient and complex individual organ-

isms; complexity and efficiency of life can proceede via social organization and interrelation. New advances will be made, not just in the single creature, but in the larger body of society. Not just one man plays great music, but a hundred men play one piece in a symphony of accord. Not just one mind, but a thousand minds will solve a problem, and a thousand backs will lift one wall.

Who will dare say this love is now dying and our day is closing? It could be, but I believe the push and force of millions of years is against such pessimism. I feel a great strength within us, a determination, a vigor, a love. It is in every man who labors to perfection, in every mother adoring her child, in every man dying that the larger race may live. There is enough of brutality and ignorance about us, but this often is the very force of love gotten off direction. Nature has wasted tragically before, and she does again. But cool waves of healing will bless mankind. Even in this murderous struggle we are building the tools and methods whereby we can undo our wreckage. The tide of life still sweeps upward within man; he is still riding the wave of a cosmic destiny. He is fortified by the love that is in all and through all, and waits but for him to make himself master of all that is.

Such is my myth and my faith. It is my poor answer to the persistent questions of "Why?" and "How?" It describes and names more than it answers. It is a leap in a great darkness. But in it I find peace and a reason for hope and an expression of faith. It carries me over despair and tragedy. In it I see my small, flickering life against the eternal curtain. I can look upon my myth and say, "So be it." In it I find courage to live, power to love, and a small light by which to dream. In it I find peace for my life, honesty for my mind, and courage to face death and my small, personal ending without fear and with serenity.

# The Double Procession of the Son

*A Naturalistic Rendering of the Incarnation*

ROBERT E. FITCH

At first glance, the doctrine of the Incarnation seems to be not amenable to a naturalistic interpretation. The connotations of the word appear to be so inescapably dualistic and supernaturalistic, that one might say that the wise and honest thing, for a naturalist, is to drop such an expression altogether. Yet all dualistic philosophies spring from human experience, and the realms of reality which are sharply separated into this world and into the other world are seen by the catholic naturalist to be simply hypostatizings of recurrent aspects of nature itself. Indeed, any great, historic tradition of supernaturalism must have its roots in the life of man on this earth, and its categories must be susceptible, without casuistry, of a naturalistic rendering. Such a rendering, at this stage of theological development, must be exploratory in character, rather than definitive; but it should be illuminating to cut across the old categories, and to search out the possibilities of new perspectives.

Therefore, in discussing the Incarnation of Christ, I shall ignore the emphases that go with the distinction between the natural and the supernatural, and shall accent other traditions. From this point of view, it will be convenient to consider the problem of the Incarnation as the problem of the "genius," or of the "hero," in history. There are theories which deny the reality of the hero. There are theories which stress his unique and transcendent qualities. And there is a theory which gives equal weight both to his uniqueness, and to his continuity with the rest of humanity. In conclusion, I shall inquire into the metaphysical relationship of the hero—God the Son—to those other aspects of natural, or divine, activities which are expressed as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

## I. THE MAGNIFICENT MEDIOCRITY

On this issue, the essence of religious agnosticism is to doubt the reality and the significance of the hero in human history.

It is part of the logic of bourgeois, scientific rationalism to assume this position. For the classical bourgeois philosophy of history renders history as pure continuity, without crisis; and, where there is no

significant crisis, there can be no real hero. To this extent, orthodox Marxism is still the heir of the formal rationalism of the middle classes. For either capitalist or communist, the hero as an individual is pure myth; the only authentic heroes are classes, historical trends and tendencies, impersonal social forces. Thus both capitalism and communism attempt to be "scientific" in the Newtonian sense, and their worlds allow for no loose ends, no indeterminacy, no igneous extrusion of dramatic personality.

Of course, both traditions, in point of fact, have had their heroes. Capitalism has had its self-made men, its robber barons, and its great captains of industry; and communism has produced, in abundance, its prophets, saints, martyrs, warriors, and statesmen. Yet the official metaphysics and the official philosophy of history of these two creeds repudiate the hero, so that the faithful are in the awkward position of denying, from orthodox principle, what their souls must deeply yearn for, and what their eyes so plainly see.

It is *de rigueur*, therefore—especially for the bourgeois outlook—that the hero be de-bunked. All claimants to so spectacular a title are automatically under suspicion. As Samuel Butler expressed it, "their view evidently was that genius was like offenses—needs must that it come, but woe unto that man through whom it comes."<sup>1</sup> The sociologist and the historian then prove that the genius, after all, was just a product of his times; and the psycho-analytic biographer points out that the hero was afflicted with false teeth, or an Oedipus complex, or Messianic delusions of persecution and of grandeur. And so the mighty monolith gradually crumbles to the level of the plain.

In the United States, in the 1920's, it was modernism that undertook to de-bunk the Christ, at the same time that American historians were de-bunking our national heroes. *The Man Nobody Knows* turned out to be, not a remote and forbidding figure of awful aura, but just a "Good Joe," whose prudence, common sense, kindness, and tolerance, made him readily accessible to the minimum effort of spiritual discipline and aspiration. To be sure, the belittling of the Christian hero must not be carried so far as to repudiate utterly his unique traits. But a really broad-minded fellow did acknowledge that other religions held a revelation of the same single truth; and that, in other times and in other places, a Buddha, or a Mohammed, or a Mahavira, might serve as well as the carpenter of Nazareth.

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Butler, *Erewhon*, New York, E. P. Dutton, 1928, p. 219.

And, in view of the theory originally held, of the transcendent character of the Christ, it was comforting to be able to argue that Jesus was just a great man, like any other great man, and that the simplest soul could imitate his Lord, and reproduce for himself the Jesus-way-of-life.

The most recent and sophisticated statement of this modernist tendency is found in *What Is Christianity?*, by Charles Clayton Morrison, who, for some decades, has been the successful journalist of bourgeois Christianity in the United States. Morrison condemns the Protestant heresy of emphasizing a critical Book and a critical experience—he does not say, outright, a critical personality!—and puts his stress on the continuity of the Christian community. “The *community* is the divine revelation, because *it* is the creative work of God.”<sup>2</sup> “If there is any revelation of God at all, our description of the revelation must be stated in such a manner as to include as revelation the concrete historical continuum within which the event occurs. If the event has meaning as revelation because of the corporate continuum in which it occurs and is perceived, then the continuum itself has meaning as revelation. And it must have *greater meaning*, because it makes the event possible and its meaning understandable.”<sup>3</sup> So it is that continuity overbears crisis; the field swallows its focus; and the mountain-peak is absorbed into the plain.

In such a cultural complex, the only acceptable hero is the Magnificent Mediocrity. His distinction as a hero is that he is devoid of any traits that might set him off from the common run of men, and that his character simply highlights, with classical simplicity, all the ordinary caution, and dullness, and short-sighted self-seeking of *l'homme moyen sensuel*. Thus his personality serves as the epitome and the universal of the middle-class mean; and, in worshipping him, men pay narcissistic homage to their own average selves. His best representatives, in modern times, have been a Calvin Coolidge and a Neville Chamberlain. Nor is it any wonder that a generation which found its wisdom in the platitudinous mumblings of a Coolidge, and which found its idealism in the pacifistic appeasement of a Chamberlain, should be unable to understand either a Christ or a Hitler. For such a generation knew neither God, nor Satan; and, just as the pale limbo of its spiritual twilight excluded the vision of heavenly as-

<sup>2</sup>C. C. Morrison, *What Is Christianity?*, New York, Willet, Clark, and Company, 1940, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 47. Italics mine.

pirations, so, being neither hot nor cold, must it be oblivious of the yawning pit of hell which should soon rise up and engulf it.

## II. THE UNIQUE GENIUS

Kant and Schopenhauer give us the theory of genius which accents its unique and transcendent qualities. Both thinkers are essentially romantics on this point, although Kant is enough of a rationalist and a bourgeois to believe that genius needs the discipline of good taste. According to Schopenhauer, the genius is the man who differs from ordinary persons, in that he has intellect in excess of what is needed to serve as a tool for appetite and for desire, and so can escape from the meaningless strife of the Will into contemplation and understanding. According to Kant, the genius is marked by originality and by audacity. He is an artist who operates by "spirit" rather than by conscious technique. We cannot imitate him with any success, because he has a talent for producing that for which no definite rule can be given, and he cannot himself explain rationally how he has accomplished his work. Indeed, he differs from us, not just in degree, but in kind.

It is irrelevant to the purposes of this paper that the classical Christian doctrine to emphasize the uniqueness and the transcendence of the Christ is rationalistic rather than romantic, dualistic and supernaturalistic rather than naturalistic. This is the *Logos* Christology. It may be that the fourth gospel was written, primarily, to argue that Jesus, though very God, did nevertheless take on human form; yet, in contrast to the Synoptics, it seems to give more weight to his divinity than to his humanity. Doubtless, John Dewey, if he were at all acquainted with Christian theology, would say that this *Logos* Christology is another instance of what he regards as the philosophic fallacy—i.e., the conversion of an eventual function into an antecedent reality. It is part of this device for stressing the transcendence of Jesus, to show that he was superior to all human weaknesses. In the fourth gospel, he does not pray in agony in Gethsemane; he does not give way beneath the cross on the way to Golgotha; he does not cry out, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The net effect is to give the character of the Christ a certain wooden infallibility.

But the Christ of the fourth gospel is recognizably human and historical compared to the theological monster created by Barth and by Brunner. The latter interprets the Incarnation as "an historical

once-and-for-all event," "the absolutely unique event," which "shatters the frame of history because it contradicts the essence of historical existence. . . ."<sup>4</sup> And Barth italicizes his high Christology by pontificating: "I am the way! Our way leads elsewhere. Jesus Christ is *not* the crowning keystone in the arch of *our* thinking. Jesus Christ is *not* a supernatural miracle that we may or may not consider true. Jesus Christ is *not* the goal which we hope to reach after conversion, at the end of the history of our heart and conscience. Jesus Christ is not a figure of history to which we may 'relate' ourselves. And Jesus Christ is *least of all* an object of religious and mystical experience."<sup>5</sup>

With the partisans of this high Christology, there can be no fruitful discussion, since they hold a monopoly on revelation, and refuse to allow themselves to be corrupted by reason. Thus Brunner denounces the "puffed up pride of reason" as the "heart of sin,"<sup>6</sup> and affirms that "faith is the contrary of proof. . . . One cannot possibly believe and also seek proof."<sup>7</sup> But perhaps Barth speaks more aptly when he describes faith as "the will for empty space," a "leap into the void."<sup>8</sup> Thus we are adjured to seek for truth, not with scientific and aesthetic objectivity, but "with the passion of a drowning man, who desperately cries for help."<sup>9</sup> And to the complacent theologian who, thinking himself to be only a bystander at the spectacle, should inquire, "But who is drowning?" the answer would be, "Thou art the man!"

However, for those drowning persons who, in their extremity, do yet desire to make sure that they do not clutch at a straw blown by the winds of doctrine, but do rest their feet upon the solid rock of redemption, the following considerations may be pertinent:

First of all, the categories of the dialectical theology do not transcend history, but transcend only a certain phase of history, and do so simply by returning to another phase of history. Barth seems to recognize this when he acknowledges his kinship with the tradition

<sup>4</sup>Emil Brunner, *The Word and the World*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931, pp. 19, 11, 36.

<sup>5</sup>Karl Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, Pilgrim Press, 1928, p. 181. Italics not mine.

<sup>6</sup>Emil Brunner, *The Theology of Crisis*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935, pp. 37, 43.

<sup>7</sup>Brunner, in R. Birch Hoyle, *The Teaching of Karl Barth*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930, p. 187.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 180 (Barth).

<sup>9</sup>Brunner, *Theology of Crisis*, p. 25.

of Jeremiah, Paul, Luther, and Calvin. Moreover, when Gogarten says that God cannot be grasped by human categories, he would be speaking more accurately if he said that God cannot be grasped by the categories of a bourgeois, rationalistic, humanistic, hedonistic civilization; for, if God cannot be grasped by any human categories, then Jesus and the prophets talked only nonsense.

Moreover, the tendency of the dialectical theologians utterly to repudiate the historicity of their religious faith<sup>10</sup> is unintelligible in view of the fact that Christianity brightens so great an expanse of history with its own figures and colors. A crisis that can proclaim its divine origin only by repudiating all continuity with temporal process is a crisis that "shatters" not only the "frame" of history, but Christianity itself, a crisis that destroys rather than creates. Indeed, what we have here is no orthodox doctrine, but a kind of Christian Brahmanism, in which the historical Jesus is no more than a convenient peg upon which the Absolute hangs its hat, as a kind of mysterious fetish before which an uncomprehending and servile congregation may do hopeless obeisance.

Again, in lifting the Christ out of history, the dialectical theologians rehearse the gnostic heresy, and come close to giving us a kind of non-ethical diabolism. There are passages in their writings which suggest the tone and temper of Hegel, when he writes of the World-Historical Individual: "He is devoted to the One Aim, regardless of all else. It is even possible that such men may treat other great, even sacred interests, inconsiderately; conduct which is indeed obnoxious to moral reprobation. But so mighty a form must trample down many an innocent flower—crush to pieces many an object in its path."—"The Litany of private virtues—modesty, humility, philanthropy, forbearance—must not be raised against them."<sup>11</sup> Actually, the Christ of Barth and of Brunner seems to have more in common with Hegel's hero and with Nietzsche's Superman, than with Jesus of Nazareth. And, since these thinkers pour contempt upon the lessons of history, and have thus discarded our only instrument for distinguishing between the good and the evil, the right and the wrong, it is not at all surprising that the god of their cult rather

<sup>10</sup>Thus Barth, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69: "Its truth is its other-worldliness . . . its non-historicity", and, again, in Hoyle, *op. cit.*, p. 203: "In history in itself, so far as the eye can reach, is nothing that can ground faith."

<sup>11</sup>J. Sibree's translation of Hegel's "Introduction to the Philosophy of History," in Hegel, *Selections*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, pp. 379-380, 427.

strikingly suggests the theological equivalent of an Adolf Hitler.

Thus the dialectical theologians have taken away the body of our Lord, and they care not where they have laid it. Says Brunner: "The 'historical Jesus' is a corpse."<sup>12</sup> . . . ! But the Christ of Barth and of Brunner is something less than a corpse. It is a pale wraith of reality — a gibbering spook that haunts the eerie parlors of a ghost theology, and frightens away the living, while it affronts the dead.

### III. THE EMERGENT HERO

There is a third theory, which gives equal weight to the unique traits of the hero and to the traits that he has in common with the rest of humanity. Metaphysically, such a theory rests on Lloyd Morgan's doctrine of emergent evolution and upon Dewey's doctrine of existence as precarious and as stable.<sup>13</sup> But, quite apart from its metaphysical bases, this theory must recommend itself as the only one that makes intelligible the actual role of the hero in human history. For, if the hero, as pure godhead, is the "wholly other" than man, there can be no significant communion between him and humanity—nothing but the abject obedience of slaves before a master whose power they dread, and whose meaning they cannot comprehend. And, if the hero, as magnificent mediocrity, simply epitomizes the ordinary qualities of all mankind, then there is no reason to call him hero, because, in following him, men do only follow themselves. However, the emergent hero has in him enough of common human stuff to show that he is one with his fellows, and thus to engage their understanding and their affection; while he has in him enough of the "superhuman" and of the *extra*-ordinary to prove that he is worthy of their loyalty and of their highest devotion.

In other words, the emergent hero is the god-man. Curiously enough, on the practical point, modern naturalism is in accord with ancient Christian orthodoxy. One may suggest, moreover, with Santayana,<sup>14</sup> that to dispute as to whether the god in the god-man is natural or supernatural is almost to engage in verbal quibbling. For, in modern, catholic naturalism, as in primitive Greek natu-

<sup>12</sup>Brunner, *The Word and the World*, p. 88.

<sup>13</sup>Chap. II of Dewey's *Experience and Nature*, Chicago, Open Court Publishing Company, 1926.

<sup>14</sup>In chap. II of *The Genteel Tradition at Bay*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931.

ralism, and as in much of Old Testament naturalism, the human and the divine, the material and the spiritual, are simply two phases of a common reality.

It is also a curious point, that the philosophy of emergent evolution should find more truth in the myth of the Virgin Birth in *Matthew* than in the *Logos* Christology of the fourth gospel. The *Logos* teaching accentuates too much the transcendent characteristics of Jesus, and, in suggesting the doctrine of a pre-existent Christ, it destroys the meaning of genuine historical emergence. The gospel of *Matthew*, on the other hand, is at once more naive and more just to the two sides of the question. Christ is a genuine novelty in the realms either of the natural or of the supernatural: as such, he is conceived and begotten, not pre-existent. As a focal expression of cumulative forces within history, he has a human mother; as a genuinely unique phenomenon within history, he has a heavenly father. The ambivalence of his nature which orthodoxy renders as transcendence and as immanence is translated by naturalism into the categories of crisis and of continuity. Thus the Christ is a familiar Moses who came, not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it; and yet he is an unfamiliar Moses who, against what hath been said by them of old time, does hold up a greater commandment before the people. He is the good householder who brings out of his store both things old and things new.

On the one hand, such a theory, taken in sharply naturalistic terms, guards the humanity of Jesus, because it insists that the crisis of the Incarnation was an organic emergent from the continuities of Hebrew religious history. Jesus came in the fullness of time, and he came *in time* because he was a product of temporal processes. We may thank Charles Clayton Morrison for boldly emphasizing this implication of emergent evolution as applied to Christian history. Nor is it any derogation from the dignity or divinity of the Christ to speak of him on such wise, since, according to this philosophy, temporality is a fundamental mode of the working of divine creativity.

On the other hand, this theory guards equally the uniqueness of Jesus; for, as an historical emergent, he rises above his constituent ingredients, and exhibits qualities and functions which were not to be found in the previous record. It is this aspect of the doctrine that Morrison has slighted. Moreover, since history is no cycle of

mechanical recurrence, Jesus is unique to the extent of being unreproducible, and unrepeatable, and hence—*pace* Barth—inimitable in the absolute sense. But—*contra* Barth—the Christ-mysticism of Paul has a meaning that is practically religious and ethical. It is, indeed, the only way the true believer can appropriate the redemptive power of Jesus, while avoiding crude imitative literalism on the one hand, and uncontrolled spiritualistic caprice on the other hand.

We may say, moreover, that the moment of the Incarnation was certainly a moment of revelation. The orthodox view errs, dramatically, in stressing the crisis of revelation—its transcendence—to the neglect of its continuities—its immanence. For revelation, as it is known in religious experience, is simply old truth that has come to some one with a sense of fresh potency and of enriched implications, or new truth that has emerged spectacularly from the cumulative growth and convergence of old patterns. It is only when the rationalizing theologian gets hold of it that revelation becomes truth as the eternally correct and dogmatically dull. It is, indeed, the blending of the old and of the new; and its appearance is at that moment when the ordered continuity of the vine and of the branches blooms critically into the fruit and its juices.

Finally, the Incarnation is veritably the Word taking on Flesh. So long as God was nothing but a Word, he was only a philosopher, or a metaphysician, or, maybe, a prophet. Even with the second Isaiah, God was still only a Word. But, when the Word took on Flesh, God expressed His meaning in the clearest manner. It is true that, at other times, and in other places, other words have assumed human form. In a Socrates, the Greek word found its embodiment; in an Abraham Lincoln—so we like to think—the American word was fulfilled; in an Adolf Hitler, the Nazi word has its incarnation. The Christian may believe, however, that, in the Christ, there found its natural home the Word that was most amply human and most loftily divine. Nor did this Word leap out of eternity to strike into time. God's Word always was in time—yet as a discarnate *Logos*. Only in the fullness of time could His Word become Flesh.

#### IV. GOD AND THE HERO

The traditional trinitarian formula speaks of the Spirit as proceeding from the Father and from the Son. On the basis of the

naturalistic theology of this essay, however, we should speak of the double procession of the Son. For the Son proceeds equally from God the Father and from God the Holy Spirit. He is, indeed, their specifically individualized manifestation.

God the Father, God the almighty creator and ruler of the heavens and of the earth, is the symbol for that phase of divine creativity which is marked by structure, coherence, stability, and reliability. It represents the recurrent rather than the unique, the ordered rather than the spontaneous, the universal rather than the specific aspects of godhead. In worshipping it, we worship God the Rock of Ages, God the Immovable Object of Devotion. With theologians, this feature of the deity has always enjoyed a favored position, and has been assumed to take precedence over other traits that were more fluid and diversified. It has been especially enshrined in the doctrines of many a Christian creed, and in the theological speculations of an Aristotle and of a Spinoza.

But religious experience, when it has not been strangled by orthodoxy, has never been satisfied with this. Besides God the Rock of Ages, it has also projected, as its symbol, God the River of Time. It may have found quiet confidence in God the Immovable Object of Devotion, but it has also been roused to stirring courage by God the Irresistible Force in History. Of such a God, one may say that His justice flows down like waters, and His righteousness as a mighty stream. Or one may liken His Holy Spirit to a wind, which bloweth whither it listeth, bringing here bane and there blessing, yet never to be read by a weathervane, nor to be shut out by a door. Thus God the Father is ordered continuity, while God the Holy Spirit is unpredictable crisis.

The Son, which proceeds from the Father and from the Holy Spirit, is the emergent which expresses the meaning of their convergent but contradictory natures. The Son is more stable than the River; more vital than the Rock. Both the River and the Rock suggest the infinite and the eternal. Neither one reveals true individuality, nor personality: the Rock, because it never stirs into expression and activity; the River, because it is ceaseless flow, and is never gathered into significant focus. In the Son, the dialectic of God's two natures blends into meaningful synthesis. The Son is the point of union of pure temporal flow and of pure eternal being. It is at this point that God's nature becomes incandescent. It is at this point that God becomes Personality.

# Quixotic and Practical People

JOSEPH REMENYI

*May I, composed like them  
Of Eros and of dust,  
Beleaguered by the same  
Negation and despair  
Show an affirming flame.*

W. H. AUDEN: September 1, 1939

## I

In these times when the creative spirit seems disfranchised from the sphere of immediate problems, it is advisable to remember Axel Oxenstierna's, the Swedish statesman's axiom about the little wisdom that is required for the governing of human beings. The strategists of public life, experts of popular limitations, prefer to worship expediency at the expense of spiritual visions. Confusion of individual and social values, as a preliminary of war, is a tradition; an abhorrence of "dreams" that are not practical characterizes those people who consider the dreamer unrealistic and the schemer realistic. Because the standard of today is applied to winning the war, it does not mean that every value that adds to human dignity should be bombarded by unbalanced phrases or by opportunistic views. It should be rather emphasized, that the sacrifice each of us brings nowadays is the result of the judgment of the "practical world" that failed dismally. The category of William James about the tough and the tender minded is still valid. The invariable emphasis of the tough minded is upon struggle; they seem to forget that struggle is not unknown to the tender minded, only the latter mobilize those factors of the spirit which connect man with the vision of truth.

In his thoughtful essay, entitled *Criticism as Pure Speculation*, John Crowe Ransom refers to "the logical substance of the poem." It is legitimate to ask, how many rationalizers of human nature, politicians, businessmen, journalists, orators, scientists, etc. associate a poem with a "logical substance"? How many of them are convinced that the incomparable beauty of certain works of art is an argument in favor of order and harmony, unappreciated by "public spirited" citizens in the past as well as in modern times? Too many people are halfhearted or entirely indifferent about the power of beauty. It is not the poet or the artist, (*poet and artist* are essentially

identical terms, but for "practical" reasons both names will be used) whose sense of values drives the world into disunity; it is the "little wisdom" of the practical minded which dominates the universe. It also affects certain types of writers and artists, disillusioned craftsmen of verbal and other rubbish, and finally reduces the horizon of the human race to empty pronouncements and active beastliness.

As a creator, the poet is a *sayer* and a *doer*. So is the artist. In his creative capacity he encounters and is provoked by a formless world, spectacular and stupid, gentle and mawkish, greedy and modest, strong and weak. His reflective reactions do not subscribe to passivity, as comprehended by certain pragmatists; his intuition enables him to recognize the Machiavelism of adjustment-seeking expediencies. But the Don Quixote of his spirit, the inherent demander and servant of an energetic sensitiveness, imagination and sense of proportion, conceives activity in a manner, that is related to intrinsic values which justify one's love of or interest in fate. The behavior and performance of practical people recalls the remark of the younger Dumas that business is other people's money. One might also add, that business often reaches out for the territory of other nations. Of course, the dreamer of the Parnassus, or the fighter of the windmills, knows very well, that he would perish in this world without the recognition of its practical necessities; but he also knows, that unless he allows dreams to enfold him, he would not be sensitized enough to be aware of his disaster. A world loaded with formless human material must inevitably explode.

Plato tried to protect the ideal state by excluding the poet from it. Since then many non-Platonic minds decided to agree with him, and gave the poet or the artist a minor or no status in their world. In fact, opponents of the creative mind did not have to prevent judgment and action by quoting Plato; the impulse that made them artistically insensitive sufficed. They trusted their own judgment, motivated by "the ideal of common good." It is small wonder, that Euripides was exiled from Athens, Dante from Florence, Poe from Richmond. Evidently in a world directed by practical men (landlords and janitors of destiny) there is a fear that recipients of beauty or similar "irrational" values might develop wrong concepts about man's place in the universe. A "civic minded" promoter once said to me that he did not mind racketeers, but he was against those who harmed public confidence in matters related

to civic duties. An amazingly liberal view! The mystery of the hippopotamus is about as extraordinary as that of the tough minded. What makes this kind of human psychology tragicomic is the fact that it knows of moral and religious aims; it sometimes interprets life in terms of human brotherhood; that is, it presents a picture of the human spirit that is quixotic in the same sense, as in the character of Sancho Panza one discovers traits reflecting the spirit of his master, the knight.

## II

By contrasting the quixotic temper with the practical I do not wish to ascribe only virtues to the first one and only defects to the second one. When man enters into the channels of everyday life he is apt to err, notwithstanding his dreaming or scheming disposition. Avarice and jealousy, triumph and frustration, are universal human experiences. Nevertheless there is a fundamental difference between the imperfections of the creative spirit and the imperfections of the utilitarian mind. The creator is primarily in quest of cosmic understanding; as it has been often stated, he wants to possess life symbolically. He does not permit his soul to be barred from eternity. Whether he is the kind of dreamer who prods the public into thinking, or the kind of thinker who succeeds in inviting the public to the realm of dreams, in the ultimate evaluation of his significance this is of secondary importance. What is important, however, is, that the quixotic temper must be free on a metaphysical basis. Even the aesthetically unreliable daydreamer expects self-realization or refuge from an inaudible emotional expression that has a non-practical explanation for its being. "Compensation-complex" is a new name for an old human habit.

The practical man is an empiricist. If religious, he bargains with eternity or peddles his soul, but his main business is not to overlook the opportunities of the moment. His *élan vital* drives him towards *things* that he likes to own. The profanation of life does not disturb him. The oppressive air of an unimaginative existence does not seem to affect him; if so, he is apt to find some superficial excitement as a counteracting force. As a rule, his emotions are ethical when focused on his family, his church, business, club, or country. The spiritual revolution of the artist against a world that narrows the pattern of understanding is, generally speaking, incomprehensible or unimportant to him. It seems a waste of time to conquer an idea or an ideal

which one cannot capitalize. He mistakes appearance for substance, rhetorical utterances for appraisal of values, mechanical cleverness for civilization. His self-confidence is conditioned by the success of his scheming. Indeed, the absence of art in his life does not trouble him at all; but the absence of money, hence of power, suggests defeat. The practical man must be free on a material basis. His practicality might be that of a capitalist, an organized worker, a farmer or of a clerk; it is materialistic in relationship to his freedom in the same sense, as one's body is materialistic in relationship to the freedom of movement.

The multitude was never profoundly interested in literature and art. In the struggle for survival men were content with direct emotions that were purely human, or with substitutes. It was precisely the 'practical' attribute of the human race which dared to touch only the peripheries of the creative dreamer; had the multitude, from a receptive viewpoint, been on the level of the creator, the slavery of matter would have been less effective in the shaping of human fate. Folk-art in itself has not diminished the gulf between the creator and the non-creator. Its producers recognized in beauty an ornamental or comforting and sometimes functional value; but consolation, obtained through an anthropomorphic obsession of the deity or through hypnotic phrases, was more important to humanity than the conflict between beauty and ugliness. Much of present-day propaganda is a ludicrous or tragic echo of those ancient times when the medicine man mesmerized superstitious individuals and crowds. The coercive method of Goebbels is a modern perversion of emotional exploitation.

The average man, whatever position he occupied in relationship to his tribe or community or country, knowingly or unknowingly always professed materialism. What was true in the past is still true. The typical practical man seems forever committed to the paradoxical task of building and destroying, when he could build without necessarily destroying almost everything that he had built. His is the logic of empiricism; of utilitarianism that seems as inevitable in the scheme of things, as life and death are inevitable. He epitomizes man's relationship to the factual which makes his estimates obvious, and his motivations as to permanent values insecure. This does not detract from his possible sincerity, but it does accentuate a point of view which explains the stereotyped deficiencies of a practical world.

The neurotic restlessness (though in many instances healthy restlessness) that a poet or an artist is likely to have, gives certain people an argument for pretending to know why the creative person should be impractical. The creative person, of course, has a greater opportunity to make himself understandable than the practical person, because to make himself understandable is his task. There were always individuals, though not poets or artists, who appreciated form and order in an aesthetic sense. The fame of Maecenas is determined by this fact. The reputation of the Church was enhanced by it. Sometimes court-life presented a lovelier spectacle because of aesthetic sensibilities. In matters of taste connoisseurs indicated imagination and sensitiveness akin to that of the creator. Some people are as much in need of good literature, good music, good painting, and other artistic expressions, as they are in need of cleanliness, stimulation or rest. Yet it remains an undeniable fact that even such people cannot be integrated into a quixotic temperament without forsaking, temporarily or permanently, their practical activities.

The case of Paul Gauguin in France and of Sherwood Anderson in America is illustrative of a psychology which forbids man to shelter in his heart, at the same time, quixotic dreams and practical schemes. The French painter and the American story-teller could not afford the ambiguity of their spiritual position; their quixotic self defied the demands of their practical existence. They could not be businessmen and artists simultaneously. Obviously, there are exceptions. For example, Wallace Stevens, the American poet, vice-president of an accident and indemnity company, is an exception; yet the eternal classical question in his significant poem, entitled *Extracts From Addresses To The Academy Of Fine Ideas*, "how can we chant if we live in evil?" was asked not by the vice-president of a business enterprise, but by a poet housed in the loneliness of his heart.

### III

It is the practical man who destroys the world because he does not know how to be practical. There is an immense and pathetic disparity between his intentions and his achievements. He insists on diligence and believes in progress. He is the bulwark of civilization. He is the platitude that plans. He is victimized by privileges and by unfairness, but chiefly by a lack of understanding in regard to the meaning of the quixotic mind. When in love, when listening to music or when enjoying nature, he witnesses fragments of beauty

in his own soul. Despite these traits, his supreme contribution to life is destruction. He fails as a humane human being. In search of success, he ignores aesthetic form which, if well perceived, is success incarnate. He might be willing to improve the social order, yet he loses sight of factors upon which depend the quality of an improved social order. In the French revolution it was the practical men who guillotined Antoine Lavoisier, the founder of modern chemistry, "because the revolution abhorred traitors and did not need scientists." In the early stage of the Bolshevik revolution it was the practical men who persecuted Alexander Block, the poet, "because a proletarian society could not assent to symbolist individualism." Practical men put Mussolini and Hitler into a position which enabled these two dictators to extract from humanity sacrifices unknown heretofore. It is the practical man, endowed with the disposition of an editorializing clairvoyant, that in the midst of the second World War already speaks about the possibility of a third and fourth World War. The philosophical participation of the practical man in the concept and motion of existence, degrades human life to the cultivation of undiscriminating or biased selfishness.

Edmund Wilson calls the poet a "wounded figure." This should not imply that the quixotic mind needs the protection of the practical minded. But it does mean, that the energy of the poet and of the artist is inhabited with a sensitiveness that seems useless in the frame that the practical man imposes upon the world. The poet and the artist represent a vision that does not detract from their human imperfection, nevertheless without which there is no understanding of the essentials of human destiny. Let us remember that the poet or the artist when mastering his medium does not create in order to have his creation destroyed. It is the non-artistic force of human life that destroys nature's beauty or the beauty that a poet or an artist shares with his fellowman. Let us also remember that the utilitarianism of the practical minded represents an attitude which lives by surface-values; therefore, it concentrates on material things. This materialistic outlook leads to smugness about art, and to a rather elastic and compromising policy about fair play. Newspapers proudly boasted that no Fourth of July was ever as peaceful as the one in 1943. What an illogical enthusiasm! The whole world has to be bombed to make people refrain from shooting firecrackers on the day of the Declaration of Independence. In a book, entitled *I Took A*

*War-Job*, the author, Josephine von Miklos, states that many war-workers hope the war lasts a long time because then they can pay for their house. The practical person's reasoning is at times so involved that it makes simplicity incomprehensible.

Every human being sometimes follows the course of a quixotic dream. It would be absurd to assume that, for example, a bartender or a broker, a politician or a miser, a housewife or a laundress, never indulged in sweet reveries. Furthermore it would be unreasonable to think that the genuine quixotic mind of the poet and of the artist, is always consistent with its cosmic obligations of order and harmony. But it can be said in good faith that the typical practical person is merely a sentimentalist of quixoticism; and the real poet or artist appears only then on par with the practical man when the absence of aesthetic understanding would make him ridiculous, should he under such circumstances remain immune to the criteria of a conventional struggle for bread and butter. The aesthetic principle is important, and not the unavoidable violation of the principle. It is important to see in the quixotic temper the spokesman of a world-view who does not wish to reform the human universe with a pragmatic technique, but who shows a badly managed practical world what the objectives of a magnificent and humble dream should be.

#### IV

I used to know a peasant nurse, a Tolstoyan character, whose favored story was the fate of words. According to her tale, once upon a time angels and devils were fighting with each other; in this fight they dropped words upon the earth. The words of the angels were good, the words of the devils were evil. Human beings who found the words of the angels became singers and remained child-like in their adult lives; those who picked up the words of the devils never learned to sing. In a morally, spiritually, politically and economically insolvent world this simple tale suggests a measure of human values. The practical man says: time is money. The quixotic man says: time is form! Of course, one should not wish to delude oneself that the designing or unimaginative nature of man will discontinue its activities, after understanding the pattern of human safety and adventurousness of the quixotic mind. But it is good to believe that should the practical person understand and approve the

quixotic disposition, the parody of truth and justice, as expressed in the so-called practical world, could be made less effective.

Scheming humanity should learn that when creative dreams are at stake, the fate of man, as a fine and worthwhile experience, is in terrible danger. Today the practical world is its own travesty. Ruthlessness and anarchy are not practical; calculation and insensitive rationalism are not practical; it is the quixotic mind in tune with the welfare of mankind that should be considered practical. Man's intuition and consciousness should and could build a world that would make every variety of ugliness criminal. Universal cataclysm demonstrates the fallacy of the practical man's common sense and good will. The creatively used quixotic mind is the greatest disciplinarian of manageable selfishness. As Francois Mauriac said, it teaches one to see with the eyes of the other fellow. A ravaged world makes the practical man's wisdom very impractical, indeed.

## Book Reviews

### A JEWISH CRITICISM OF SHOLEM ASCH'S *THE APOSTLE*

Sholem Asch follows the New Testament sources almost literally. He accepts as historic fact much that New Testament critics, such as Eduard Meyer and Shirley J. Case, consider as legend—nor does he point out even a few of the very many differences and contradictions in the four Gospels. Only by re-reading the New Testament do you realize how faithfully Asch follows the Synoptic Gospels and Paul's own writings. The reader is, now and then, detoured by one of Asch's lush reconstructions reared on a furtive hint as, for instance, by his description of the bronze workers in Corinth, the burning of Rome by the pyromaniacal Nero, the rabbit warrens of the Roman underworld, the priapic rites in honor of Aphrodite, the temple prostitution of Diana of the Ephesians, Sabina Poppea's baths of asses' milk, the degenerate splendor of the Roman nobility. These chapters, rich and riotous as a Persian rug, do honor to the literary craftsmanship of the author. Perhaps, too, they are the nostalgic compensation of Asch, the sensualist, for his strange identification with the ascetic, celibate, beauty-blind Paul.

Faithful to the New Testament sources, Asch describes Paul as the heir of two civilizations—the cosmopolitan, pagan, aesthetic Greek civilization of his birthplace, Tarsus in Asia Minor, and the Judaic civilization which he learned at the feet of Gamaliel in the School of Jerusalem. Paul was not like Jesus, cut out of one piece, native and loyal to Palestine. He was granite caught between two millstones. Asch, committed to the creation of a Paul who synthesizes the conflicting elements within him, fails to see a pattern obvious to another Jewish scholar, Joseph Klausner. Klausner explains Paul's harsh aggressiveness, his opportunism, his being all things to all men, his inability to hold intimate friendships, to this unresolved conflict of two loyalties and to the consequent feeling of guilt whenever he veered to one at the expense of the other. Thus, he bitterly castigates the Jews for their insistence on Torah and the ceremonies and equally violently excoriates the pagans for their lack of moral discipline.

While Asch recognizes Paul's jealousy of Peter and James and the other disciples who sat at the feet of Jesus, he does not sufficiently emphasize the importance of this fact in Paul's exaltation of the spiritual, symbolic Jesus at the expense of the earthly Jesus of flesh and blood. Paul, not able to compete with the disciples on terms of authentic representation of the Saviour, creates his own saviour and his own universe of discourse where he can give himself his own rating. It is strange, indeed, that Asch, who can enter into the muddled, complex motivations of the sadistic, hermaphroditic

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<sup>1</sup>THE APOSTLE. By Sholem Asch. Translated by Maurice Samuel. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1943. 804 pp. \$3.00.

Nero and the whimsical vagaries of the lewd, shrewd Poppea, reins in his prehensile psychologizing when he comes to Paul and accepts his vision on the road to Damascus as a real, mystical experience of the twice-born—as a pouring in from the Over-Soul—as an acceptable Revelation. Asch goes so far as to sublimate Paul's guilt feeling for his share in the stoning of Stephen into a vision of his own destiny as the suffering martyr for the Lord.

These are, indeed, debatable matters. Whether Klausner<sup>2</sup> or Asch have drawn more valid deductions from the recorded characteristics of Paul cannot be established with any exactitude from our present knowledge of morbid behavior patterns. But there are other interpretations which time and experience have placed in a more manageable frame of reference. And it is on the basis of these interpretations that I see Asch in the unpalatable role of compromiser and toady—one “who bends the pregnant hinges of the knee knowing that favor follows fawning.”

To exalt the faith of Paul, Asch contemns the tradition of Israel. He seems to share Paul's disgust with the stiff-necked fence-menders, the Torah-true Jews. Surely one looks in vain for a defense of the Torah, such as Feuchtwanger puts into the mouth of Gamaliel in his “*Josephus*.” Asch does not have the understanding of the Pharisaic position which is manifested by the gentile scholars, the late George Foote Moore and the eminent Unitarian, Travers Herford. And it is not because he does not know the facts. The same Asch, who seems to understand Paul's necessity to take the Nazarite vows and to be a Jew among the Jews in order to convert the Jews, does not sympathize with the hard-headed observant Jews who are true to the Torah as a way of life. Asch shares Paul's impatience with the Jews' unreadiness to accept his gospel of salvation. He agrees with Paul that circumcision and the laws of permitted and forbidden foods have blinded the Jews to the glory of the “vision.” It is this intemperate resentment of the normative Jews' logical processes and Torah anchorage which blinds Asch from seeing the profoundly radical difference between the Jewish and the Christian conception of the Messiah.

The Messiah of the Jews was a political Messiah as well as a religious one. He would come to sit upon a kingly throne to right the wrongs of this world as well as to prepare for the next. Such a Messiah would come after a period of chaos and upheaval but could not be co-existent with a state of injustice and oppression. Such a Messiah would be a grave and real challenge to the Caesars of flesh and blood. This conception flowed out of the healthy, this-worldly, earthy-mindedness of our people. Paul knew that he could not make much capital out of this kind of Messiah. It would bring him into a head-on clash with Caesar. It would necessitate political disci-

<sup>2</sup>See his magnificent *From Jesus to Paul*. Translated by William F. Stinespring. New York: Macmillan Co., 1943. 624 pp. \$3.50. It is comforting to realize that this book written in Hebrew, the language of our national revival, takes a forthright, honest position in stark contrast to the flabby accommodation of the novel written in Yiddish, the language of our dispersion.

pline and works from the gentiles—many of whom were, mind you, hungry for a short cut to salvation.

So Paul took the main chance and distilled his Messiah into the ethereal vapours where Caesar need not fear him and built his bridge of *faith* to him—a bridge that could be built merely with prayer and pious hopes. Paul, himself, succumbed to this escapist negation of life. He came to consider death for Jesus as more glorious than life for the people. His own eagerness to imitate the Lord through dying on the Cross and his admonition to Peter to do likewise is the last logical step in his failure of nerve and his degenerate defeatism.

Asch perverts history and mocks Jewish sentiment by identifying this kind of death with the high tradition of Jewish martyrdom. Jews may have bowed the neck to Caesar's sword and gone to their death with the Shema on their lips, but they did not believe that their deaths automatically destroyed the Caesars.

Paul and Peter, by their deaths, did not synthesize the best of the Hebraic and Christian tradition. They left a heritage to the western world of defeatism and escapism which has well-nigh cancelled the power for good of the Hebraic-Christian ethic.

Fortunately for mankind, the democratic citizen of today does not go to his death before the sadistic Caesars with a smile and a prayer of forgiveness ("They know not what they do!"). Fortunately for us, the Jews of Warsaw and the marines on Tarawa do not believe that their deaths will subtly corrode the swords of might by the sublime example of their martyrdom. They choose to make their deaths costly. They believe that to turn the cheek to the enemy is to enable the enemy to destroy the very climate in which love and sacrifice have any meaning. The spiritual does not descend from the clouds—a divine intrusion—at it did to Paul near Damascus. It grows out of the experience and labors of men and, if man is destroyed in the flesh, the seed bed of the spirit is also destroyed. Is it not pathetically perverse of Asch to lend his powers to recreate the defeatist emphasis of Christianity at a time when the vast world struggle is unconsciously forcing Christianity to abandon its negative other-worldliness and to accept the Maccabean spirit of militant defiance to evildoers? By identifying himself with the escapist, schizophrenic, morbid preaching of Paul and in counselling the wisdom and, yes, the majesty of dying like the Christian-Jewish slaves in the arena under the eyes of Nero and Tigellinus, Asch mocks the true dignity of man and becomes an unwitting tool of the Neros of our time.

K. A. M. Temple,  
Chicago, Illinois

JACOB J. WEINSTEIN

## A TRIBUTE TO A GREAT TEACHER

This volume consists of a series of independent essays and memoirs written by friends and former students of Mr. Babbitt.<sup>1</sup> Taken together, these essays and memoirs constitute a biographical narrative. In many instances, the names of the contributors are those which, twelve or fourteen years ago were identified with the movement known as literary humanism. Paul Elmer More, Norman Foerster, G. R. Elliott, Alan Reynolds Thompson, Harry Haydon Clark—and many others—are names familiar to those who followed the literature on the subject a little over a decade ago. But there are other contributors too. Two of these whose names are of especial interest to the readers of this JOURNAL are James Luther Adams, professor of the philosophy of religion at The Meadville Theological School and J. Bryan Allin, chairman of the Committee on Public Affairs of the First Unitarian Church of Chicago. Together, these two men have written one of the most illuminating chapters in the book. As former students of Irving Babbitt, these men have recalled incidents and episodes in their relationship with their teacher which are as revealing as any in the book.

What are some of the characteristics which, as a man and as a teacher, Irving Babbitt displayed to his friends and students? Or better perhaps, just how did the spirit of this man to whom so many find themselves indebted communicate itself to those about him? Well, above everything else, he seems to have been a thorough-going individualist, one of the last perhaps in an age of increasing standardization. Irving Babbitt believed primarily in ideas. He was unwilling to identify himself with or conform to any pattern simply because that pattern was in vogue. No one could more surely spot a vogue in ideas and philosophies than he. His individualism, it should be noted, was by no means of the eccentric type. His life was dedicated to teaching the importance of the humanely normal as distinguished from the merely novel or different. That he attached more weight to the profession of teaching than to that of preaching is indicated in a passage contained in the Adams-Allin chapter of the book referred to above. Adams had remarked upon his intention of entering the ministry. Babbitt protested that he could be more effective as a teacher. He said:

"As a preacher you will have to address a whole congregation, and you will have little direct influence. Students are responsible, at least in examinations, for showing that they have learned something. Is there any such definite relationship and sense of mutual responsibility in the church? Each year, I select four or five students and talk and work with them a good deal outside the class. In that way, I expect that ideas will really be grasped before they are disseminated. That is hardly possible for a minister."

Mr. Babbitt occupied the Chair of French Literature at Harvard for forty years. His interest in literature appears to have been more on the side of its ethical implications than on that of its art. His point of view was in

<sup>1</sup>IRVING BABBITT, MAN AND TEACHER. Edited by Frederick Manchester and Odell Shepard. New York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1941. \$3.00.

consequence both very much broader and much narrower than that of the ordinary teacher of literature today. To one of the contributors to this volume, for example, a former student who announced to Babbitt that he proposed to devote himself mainly to American literature, Babbitt replied with a twinkle:

"So you're going to devote yourself to American literature? Well, in preparation, you'd better study the ancient Greeks."

This advice was typical. Many of his colleagues complained, however, that he was incapable of reading romantic writing and catching the beauty which it contained. He was charged with being essentially a preacher and that he undoubtedly was, his comment to Adams concerning that vocation to the contrary notwithstanding. The fact remains, too, that Babbitt succeeded in arousing among his students an interest in literature and the arts generally which other teachers failed to do. Perhaps people are interested essentially in morals and ethics.

Irving Babbitt, it appears was an impressive looking man—tall, vital, albeit somewhat stoop-shouldered. His manner was distinctive rather than distinguished. One gathers that, outside his classroom and his study in Widener Hall, a large part of his thinking and his conversation were carried on in the course of the long walks along the Charles and throughout Cambridge which were a part of his daily routine. A quality that is emphasized in the book, and one that those who know him only through his writings might suspect as lacking, is his magnanimity. Apparently, despite the fact that he proceeded so unsparingly to the attack on ideas, he was surprisingly free from personal animosities and was genuinely liberal in his judgment of the men who expressed those ideas. Thus for President Eliot, against whose elective system in education he made such sweeping criticisms, he has only praise when referring to him as a person. One of the most marked traits in Irving Babbitt, according to Frederick Manchester, "was an extraordinary impersonality in his way of thinking—and speaking—of others. A man to him was first of all what he was in philosophical terms, and it would never have occurred to him that this was not something one should be careful not to talk about freely where one's friends were concerned, lest one should seem lacking in courtesy or cordiality. Such matters to him were public property, belonging to the free world of the critical mind. Likewise characteristic was his immediate plunge, with no preliminary ceremonies, nor slow circling downward from the surface of things, into ideas. What Johnson said of Burke—'Yes, Sir; if a man were to go by chance at the same time with Burke under a shed, to shun a shower, he would say this is an extraordinary man'—might with perfect truth be said of Babbitt."

The contributors to this book vary widely in age, in temperament, in background and in nationality. One ought in the briefest review to refer to the profound respect and esteem Babbitt commanded both in Europe and in the Orient. His studies in the literature of France, China and the Orient generally attracted attention outside the borders of his own country, and

among the contributors to this narrative are a number of French and Chinese students. Perhaps the most lasting impression made upon the mind of the average reader will be the extent to which one man was able to stimulate and to inspire so many students. When men write that years after they have moved quite out of the sphere of a teacher they still continue to ask what that teacher would think about a certain problem, it testifies to the man's power. Irving Babbitt had that power. It was a great power and one terribly needed in his time and ours. The story of such a man is bound to be interesting. Presented, as it is here, in a volume written by two score of colleagues, students and disciples, it makes highly profitable, as well as pleasant, reading.

The First Unitarian Church,  
Niagara Falls, New York

ROBERT B. DAY.

### CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

To any man who ceased his reading of philosophy with Weber, this book would be a messenger of dismay; an attitude which would grow as he progressed from essay to essay.<sup>1</sup> It starts out comfortably enough with a treatise on Ethics written in the familiar style of Tufts, but let the reader get into Axiology, by Urban, and Metaphysics, by Hall; and there will dawn upon him the realization that hard sledding is ahead. The vocabulary is English, but the terminology is one of the new wonders of this age. Logical Empiricism, Philosophic Naturalism, Personalism, the amended meaning of Realism, are a few of the terms which ought to convince any member of the old school that he just hasn't been anywhere.

I say these things not to discourage, but to challenge. Here are writers and chapters for every human mood. If Bertrand Russell seems to be too smart for his pants, Ralph Flewelling and William P. Montague bring assurance that the former things are not quite vanished away. And in this day of interest in Russia, the essay of John Somerville on Dialectical Materialism points to the fact that doings in that nation can be fitted into a definite philosophical system.

It is good for a man to read this book. If he knows anything at all, he realizes that many former conceptions of pre-Einstein philosophers, along with those of scientists of the same era, have been knocked into a cocked hat. It is heartening to learn that men of intelligence and honesty are striving to make this brave new world understandable.

The First Universalist Society,  
Portland, Maine

DONALD B. F. HOYT

<sup>1</sup>TWENTIETH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY; Living Schools of Thought. Edited by Dagobert D. Runes. New York: The Philosophical Library, 1943. 571 pp. \$5.00.